EXHALL CHURCH, NEAR COVENTRY.

We give the above view of this now complete and interesting little village church. It has lately been enlarged and repaired, by the addition or rebuilding of a south aisle and porch, and a new roof and window to the chancel. The Incorporated Society for the Repairs and Enlargement of Churches and Chapels, contributed in their usual efficient manner to the fund; the rest was raised by rate and subscription. The works were under the conduct of Mr. Charles Hansom, architect, of Coventry, and we need not say that he has executed his task in a very creditable manner.

THE NEW ROYAL EXCHANGE.

Instead of being at all premature, some of the remarks we are about to make come too late to be of the service they otherwise might—that is, supposing suggestions so thrown out to be ever attended to, which may fairly be questioned; for although architects are apt to be not a little sensitive when their productions are animadverted upon, they rarely seem disposed to screen themselves from criticism by attending to, and profiting by, what it has objected to, either in their own works or those of others. It is probable, therefore, that our observations will be of just as much service now as they would have been if brought forward when they could have been acted upon, at least fully taken into consideration before it had been determined to pursue an opposite course. But with regard to consideration, none at all, as far as we can ascertain, appears to have been given to what was one of the most essential points to be deliberated upon at the very outset, *viz.* whether the new Exchange should be covered in or not. All we know is, that, instead of its being made a question, it seems to have been settled, or rather assumed as matter of course, that it should be a mere open court, such having been the case in the former building. No idea of the possibility of any thing else appears to have occurred to any one—at least not to any one who had a voice in the matter. Yet though we say it should have been made a question for discussion, we do not think there was occasion for much discussion, the advantages of the central area being covered in instead of left open, being so many and so obvious, that merely to specify them would have been sufficient, we think, to carry the decision at once in favour of such plan. What could have been urged in behalf of the contrary mode—the one actually adopted—we cannot even conjecture; therefore, if any arguments at all were adduced in its support or justification, we should be exceedingly glad to learn what they were—which is more, we suspect, than any one can inform us. The only satisfaction then left us, until we are so informed, is the liberty of concluding that, notwithstanding all that was said at the time about the vast importance of the Royal Exchange as "a National Edifice, that should be in every respect worthy of the first commercial city in the world," and much more to the same effect; very little of careful consideration seems to been bestowed upon it, great as was the delay, and noisy as was the squabbling as to who should be the architect.

Had a thought been given to the matter at the outset, it would probably have been perceived that, even supposing it otherwise mere matter of indifference whether the area were covered in or not, there was a golden argument to turn the scale in favour of its being covered—namely, increased rental from the shops on the exterior of the building, in consequence of the greater space that could then have been given up to them, without at all interfering with the accommodation required for the body of the Exchange. According to Mr. Tite's plan, the entire space occupied by the latter will be about 19,000 square feet, but out of this number, 6,500 will be quite open and unsheltered, consequently cannot always be made use of for purposes of business. Now had it been determined that the centre portion of the plan should be covered in, there would have been shelter everywhere, therefore the breadth of the ambulatories might have been considerably reduced, so as to afford an additional depth of nine or ten feet to the shops—some of which will now not be more than 7 feet in depth, or hardly that. Even then the actual space available at all times for business would have been the same, or rather more than will now be the case. And so far from the architectural effect being at all injured by such contraction of the space behind the columns, it would, in our opinion, be improved, and the whole would, in fact, appear to be more spacious than it is now likely to do; for the width of the cloister portion or ambulatories will now be so great, in order to provide a sufficiency of sheltered space, that while they will look low and depressed, they will occasion the open part or court to appear comparatively narrow and squeezed up; more especially as the same space looks considerably less when uncovered than when roofed in.

We have heard it urged as an objection to the Exchange being covered in, that it would be exceedingly difficult to light it from above without a very great sacrifice of architectural character. We, ourselves, however, are of a diametrically contrary opinion. Even supposing it to be covered by a mere skylight as a protection from the weather (as is the case with the cortile of the new structure at Liverpool, called the Brunswick-buildings), we do not see how that could interfere with the architectural elevations of the sides. We do not say it would be an improvement in point of appearance, but it would not be any great drawback on it. Hardly, however, should we recommend a skylight of that homely description for such a place as the Exchange; and skylights admit of being put into such a great variety of form, whether introduced so as to appear mere cofferings or panels receding little within the general surface of the ceiling; or as lanterns,—which may be ceiled above, and open only on their sides; and further admit of such great diversity of decoration, that a roof of the kind may be accommodated to any style and any design. While it is the most original, its ceiling, with three large skylights of plate glass (each consisting of two sloping panes parallel with those of the external and internal roof), is not the least happy idea in the interior of the Walhalla, and certainly magnificent enough, it consisting almost entirely of bronze and gilding.

For these fifty years at least, not a single edifice has been erected for the purpose of an Exchange for merchants, either in Europe or America, but what has been covered in and protected from the weather, and now, instead of further improvement being aimed at, we are reverting to the old inconvenient plan of a mere open court, and to what, as such, will be no better than a pent-up and dismal area, except, perhaps, during a few remarkably bright days in the course of a summer. Almost might it be imagined that the "open court" had been determined upon, by the company of umbrella-makers, and that of "undertakers" also. The city worthies seem to have either a very singular taste for unconfortableness, or else very singular notions of convenience. No sooner had the public begun to congratulate themselves on the very great advantages attending wooden pavements, than Sir Peter Laurie set about attempting, not to *put them down*, but to take them all *up* again.

The architect of the Royal Exchange has, it seems, had sufficient influence with the committee to prevail on them to have the pediment of the portico enriched with sculpture; let him then now recommend, while it may be yet time, that the "area" should be covered in above; for then it would be protected from the atmosphere and its London smoke, as well as from the weather; and as a hall, it would not only appear more spacious than as an open court, but also more lightsome and cheerful—certainly would be more cleanly, because its pavement would be always dry.

As to difference of appearance in regard to spaciousness, there can be no doubt; but what sort of effect, we ask, as to size, would Westminster Hall make without its roof? To an open cortile, in itself there can be no objection; but we must contend, it is preposterous to adopt it for a purpose where something more is obviously required.—*Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal.*

Great progress has been made during the last two days in placing the sculptured coping above the columns as well as over the other parts of the building. The transition is more striking on account of the elaborate workmanship being all performed ere the stone is raised, and but a short time is now required, with the improved machinery at command, to fix it at once in its position.

Composition Roofs.—At a meeting of the "Institution of Civil Engineers," held on the 21st ult., a paper was read by Mr. Hogg, descriptive of the roofs used in Buckingham Palace, which are covered with Lord Stanhope's composition. This composition, which appears to be formed of tar, chalk, and sand, boiled and mixed together, was introduced by Mr. Nash for covering the fire-proof arched roofs, carried by cast-iron beams over the palace. It has been often laid upon wooden joists; and when slates or tiles are imbedded in it, while fluid, a perfectly waterproof roof is formed, which is very durable, demands little repair, and possesses many advantages over roofs covered with metal.

Kimnel Park.—The splendid mansion now in course of erection in Kimnel Park, the property of the Right Honourable Lord Dinorben, is proceeding rapidly towards completion. The additions which have been made and the internal alterations which are being effected, are taking place under the superintendence of T. Hopper, Esq., architect. Messrs. Bird are the contractors for the building. It will doubtless be in the recollection of most of our readers, that the former mansion was almost totally destroyed by fire twelve months back.

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